Applicant's Proposed Claim Groupings

1. **The Claims in Groups V, VI and VII share the unifying limitation of alphaviruses that infect dendritic cells and therefore searching these claims together will eas the Examin r's burden and result in mor meaningful search results.**

Applicants respectfully assert that claims 1-6 and claims 17-34, corresponding to Examiner's Groups V, VI and VII should be maintained as a single claim group. These claims can be easily searched together and, in fact, a more detailed and meaningful search will result if these claims are maintained as a single group. The Examiner's Groups V and VI generally correspond to alphavirus particles that infect dendritic cells. Specifically, Groups V and VI relate to recombinant alphavirus particles that infect dendritic cells.

Group V alphavirus particles (other than ATCC #VR-2526) infect human dendritic cells. Group VI alphavirus particles (other than Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis (VEE) or ATCC #VR-2526) infect *non-human* dendritic cells. Groups V and VI collectively and individually claim a variety of alphaviruses including Sindbis virus, Semliki Forest Virus, Ross River virus and VEE virus. Therefore, taken together, Groups V and VI are directed at alphavirus particles that infect dendritic cells. Applicants respectfully assert that a search of prior art directed at "alphavirus particles that infect dendritic cells" would accomplish the same results as three individual searches. Such broad search language would result in the Examiner identifying all relevant prior art disclosing alphavirus particles that infect either human or non-human dendritic cells as well as recombinant alphavirus particles that infect human and non-human dendritic cells. Consequently, only a single comprehensive search would be required, thus lessening the Examiner's overall search burden as opposed to three independent searches. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that Groups V and VI should be combined.

Applicants also assert that Examiner's Group VII, claims 24-34, should be combined with Groups V and VI. Group VII is directed to methods of using the alphavirus particles of Groups, V and VI to transform cells. It is axiomatic that a method of using a composition of matter cannot be searched in a vacuum. The Examiner would not search methods for transforming cells using heterologous nucleotide sequences in the abstract. Rather, the Examiner's search parameters must include cell

transformation methods using alphavirus particles including the alphaviruses of claims 19 through 23. Consequently, a significant portion of the Examiner's search for methods of using alphaviruses will have been completed after searching groups V and VI. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that a more efficient and comprehensive prior art search will result when the methods of Group VII are combined with the alphavirus particles of Groups V and VI.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that claim Groups V, VI and VII should be combined into a single claim group and prosecuted together in the present application.

2. **Groups VIII, XIV and X share the unifying limitation of alphavirus vectors and therefore searching these claims together will ease the Examiner's burden and result in more meaningful search results.**

Applicants assert that Groups VIII, XIV and X (claims 35, 36 and 37) are all various forms of alphavirus vectors having a nucleic acid molecule that operably encodes all four alphavirus nonstructural proteins. At least one of these alphavirus nonstructural proteins having a mutation as compared to wild type virus. Consequently, the overall search burden for the Examiner would be significantly reduced as compared to conducting three separate narrower searches. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that Groups VIII, XIV and X should be combined into a single group including claims 35, 36 and 37.

3. **Groups II, III and IV all claim nucleic acid sequences encoding alphavirus proteins and should be searched together.**

Claims 7-10 claim nucleic acid molecules having sequences encoding for alphavirus structural proteins (note that claim 7 claims a nucleic acid molecule which encodes an alphavirus, therefore, alphavirus structural proteins would, at a minimum, be encoded for on that nucleic acid molecule). Nucleic acid molecules having sequences that encode for alphavirus structural proteins such as those of claims 7-10 are used to make the expression cassettes of claims 11 and 12. These expression cassettes are in turn used to make the packaging cells of claims 13-16. Consequently, a search using the unifying limitation "alphavirus expression cassettes having nucleic